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State board reaffirms its rejection of Bethlehem landfill expansion

By Mark Hayward Union Leader Staff

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The North Country Environmental Services landfill in Bethlehem, which Casella Waste Management says is running out of capacity.

John Koziol/Union Leader Correspondent

A state board last week reiterated an earlier rejection of plans to expand the Casella Waste Systems landfill in the town of Bethlehem.

The New Hampshire Waste Management Council rejected requests by Casella and the state Department of Environmental Services (DES) to reconsider a decision this past spring, which rejected the expansion.

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In doing so, the Waste Management Council ruled that the DES did not follow state law when it granted permits for the expansion in 2020. At present, the landfill is scheduled to be capped and closed in four years.

“We’ll say it again: there is simply no need for this landfill,” said Conservation Law Foundation staff attorney Heidi Trimarco in a statement.

“The Waste Management Council has made it clear yet again that the state cannot permit new landfills that aren’t needed to satisfy New Hampshire’s disposal needs. It’s time for Casella to give up this fight and be a partner in reducing waste through recycling and composting,” Trimarco said.

Vermont-based Casella operates the North Country Environmental Services landfill in Bethlehem and had sought expansion.

In an email, a Casella official said the company expected the case would end up in the New Hampshire Supreme Court ever since this past spring, and the company intends to appeal to the high court.

“It is premature for anyone, particularly opponents of the landfill’s future role in New Hampshire’s environmental infrastructure, to claim victory in this matter,” said Jeff Weld, Casella director of engagement.

State law required the company to request a reconsideration by the Waste Management Council before appealing to the Supreme Court, he said.

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